AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please amend the figures as shown in the enclosed replacement sheets. Figures 9 and 10 have been amended to include a designation of Prior Art.

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 2 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 2.

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to recite that a swing gear is attached to the swing arm and is continuously kept in contact with at least one of the first reel gear and the intermediate gear. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, on page 15, lines 17-22 of the specification. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

Objection(s)

The specification is objected to for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter, specifically, for the term "swing gear." This rejection is respectfully traversed. The specification recites that the "idler mechanism for driving the reels 2a, 2b which are the one reel and the other reel includes a motor 28 for driving the reels 2a, 2b, an input gear 5 which serves as a drive gear driven by the motor 28, an idler gear 4 which serves as a swing gear driven by the input gear 5, and intermediate gears 7, 8 for transferring the driving force by the idler gear 4 to the reel 2b," (page 13, line 25 – page 14, line 6). Thus, antecedent basis for the swing gear is provided in the specification. According, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The drawings are objected to because Figures 9 and 10 are not labeled "Prior Art." Replacement Figures 9 and 10 are submitted with this reply having been amended to include a designation of Prior Art. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Claim 2 has been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention recited. Specifically, claim 2 has been amended to recite a "first gear" and a "second gear." Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (a) or (b) as being anticipated by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Claims 1 and 2 have been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention recited. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention advantageously provides a magnetic recording/reproducing apparatus and an electric apparatus provided with an idler mechanism that is relatively simple in structure and is less costly to produce.

Independent claim 1 recites a magnetic recording/reproducing apparatus used with a magnetic tape cassette having a pair of tape reels. The apparatus includes first and second reels for driving the tape reels of the magnetic tape cassette, a first reel gear connected to the first reel and rotatable about a same center axis of the first reel, a second reel gear connected to

the second reel and rotatable about a same center axis of the second reel, an intermediate gear arranged between the first reel gear and the second reel gear, a swing arm arranged between the first reel gear and the intermediate gear, a swing gear attached to the swing arm and continuously kept in contact with at least one of the first reel gear and the intermediate gear, and a drive gear.

Independent claim 2 recites an electric apparatus that includes a first gear, a second gear, a swing arm arranged between the first gear and the second gear, a swing gear attached to the swing arm and continuously kept in contact with at least one of the first gear and the second gear, and a drive gear.

As seen in Fig. 3, the distance between the reel gear 31a and the intermediate gear 7 is determined so that the teeth 6 of the idler gear 4 can be kept continuously in mesh with at least one of the teeth 3 of the reel gear 31a and the teeth 17 of the intermediate gear 7 at at least one of meshing portions 13a and 13b. In other words, in the idler mechanism according to one embodiment, a state where the teeth 6 of the idler gear 4 are not in contact with both the teeth 3 of the reel gear 31a and the teeth of the intermediate gear 7 does not occur. Thus, where the first gear and second gear are driven, the swing gear can be surely kept in mesh with the first gear or second gear, respectively. Because the swing gear is continuously kept in contact with at least one of the reel gear and the intermediate gear, when the swing gear moves toward the intermediate gear while the swing gear rotates in the direction opposite to where the swing gear drives the reel gear, the swing gear is kicked out from the reel gear at the contact area between the swing gear and the reel gear. At substantially the same time, the swing gear bites the intermediate gear at the contact area between the swing gear and the intermediate gear.

The AAPA discloses an idler mechanism that includes a pair of reels, gears concentrically attached to the reels a train of gears, and an idler mechanism. A rotating torque (swinging torque) is exerted on the swing arm in order to swing the idler gear between the first position and the second position. In order to generate such swinging torque, a spring may be arranged so as to press the idler gear toward the spring arm. Alternatively, an input gear having a specific shape equipped with a flange may be employed. Such a conventional idler mechanism, in which the spring is arranged to press the idler gear on the swing arm, has a complicated structure and requires an increased number of components because the spring is a separate component. Further, producing an input gear having a specific shape with, for example, a flange, may be more costly.

The AAPA fails to show or suggest, however, an idler mechanism that includes a swing gear attached to a swing arm that is also continuously kept in contact with at least one of the first reel gear and the intermediate gear. Additionally, the AAPA fails to show an idler mechanism that does not require a spring or flanged input gear. In contrast, embodiments of the present invention provide an idler mechanism without using a spring for bringing the swing gear into contact with the swing arm and without forming the shape of the gear in a specific shape, thereby keeping the structure simple and reducing the manufacturing costs.

In view of the above, the AAPA fails to show or suggest the present invention as recited in the claims, as amended. Thus, independent claims 1 and 2, as amended, are patentable over the AAPA. Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 04995/122001).

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

By 45,925

Jonathan P. Osha
Registration No.: 33,986
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)

Attachments

104432_1